

## Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra from the Caitanya-vaiṣṇava perspective

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Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

The sixteen-word mantra – Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare – in recent decades has become widely known. Formerly it was available only to a rather limited number of individuals following one of the many spiritual paths in traditional India. It was spread all over the world in 1960-70s due to the efforts of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977), the founder of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, who came to the USA with his mission in 1965. This mantra is considered by many Vaisnavas, especially by the followers of Śrī Caitanya, to be the greatest and most effective among many other spiritual chants, thus it is usually called the “mahā-mantra” meaning “the great mantra.”

Vedic scriptures are based on sacred sound (*śabda*). Indeed, every word of Veda is sacred and deemed eternal by both the Vedas themselves and by their followers. Different schools within the tradition accept different mantras or sacred sound vibrations as most important. However, for the present age of Kali-yuga, *śāstras* unequivocally enjoin congregational chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa as the main religious process:

*kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ  
dvāpare paricaryāyām kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

“Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Deity of the Lord can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the name of Lord Hari”. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.3.52)<sup>1</sup>.

Other Purāṇas emphatically proclaim:

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari.” Nārada-purāṇa (1.41.115) and Br̥han-nāradya-purāṇa (38.126)<sup>2</sup>

### The holy name, mantra and mahā-mantra

“Mantra” is traditionally defined in Sanskrit as “*mananāt trāyate yasmāt tasmān mantraḥ prakīrtitaḥ*”<sup>3</sup> – “that which delivers one from [unwanted] occupation of the mind is known to be a mantra” or, alternatively, “that which protects a person meditating on it.”<sup>4</sup>

Medinī-kośa, a standard Sanskrit thesaurus, explains “mantra” as follows:

*mantro veda-viśeṣo syād devādīnām ca sādhanam*

“Mantra is a particular part of a Veda or a process of worshiping the gods and others.” (27.74)<sup>5</sup>

Thus any name of Kṛṣṇa, being a verbal instrument of Kṛṣṇa worship, is a mantra, which is corroborated by almost all Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava writings. Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, being composed of sixteen names of Kṛṣṇa, is therefore a mantra too. However, at the same time it has its own specialty (*viśeṣa*) which makes it different from the other mantras. Usually a mantra (except for *gāyatrī-mantras*) has three parts: *bīja* (a syllable which is a mystic seed of a mantra), a word denoting adoration or obeisance (like “*namaḥ*” or “*svāhā*”) and the name of a deity in the dative case. Brahma Purāṇa states:

*omkāraḍi-samāyuktaṁ namaskāraṁta-dīpitaṁ  
tan-nāma sarva-tattvānāṁ mantra ity abhidhīyate*

“Mantra is a name of the Lord, who is the chief principle, which is preceded by a sacred syllable like om or other and which is illumined by obeisances in the end.” (Brahma Purāṇa, 61.51)<sup>6</sup>.

However, all the names in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra are in the vocative case. Commenting on this, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (1874-1937), the guru of Bhaktivedānta Swami, explains:

“That very teaching that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave to the world, we received from our guru in the form of *mantra*. What our guru gave us is not an ordinary mantra, but a *mahā-mantra*. That which delivers one from anxiety and excessive intellectual reasoning is called *mantra*. Ordinary *mantras* are in the dative case and contain such words as “*namaḥ*”, “*svāhā*” or “*svadhā*” etc., while *mahā-mantra* is in the vocative case. The holy name of the Lord is *mahā-mantra*. The holy name contains such potency that cannot be found in any other object whatsoever.” (From the opening address during Theistic Exhibition, October 24, 1930)<sup>7</sup>.

In the Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-bhāgavatam there is a well-known story of Ajāmila, a sinner who uttered the holy name before his death. In the verse 6.2.19 Ajāmila is said to have uttered a *mantra*, although in the previous chapter it was described that he called out the name “Nārāyaṇa.” Commenting on this, Jīva Gosvāmī (second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century) writes:

*mantra-śabdenātra nāmoktiḥ, mantrasya tathā-prabhāve śraddhādy-apekṣatvāt, asya tu tad-anapekṣatvāt.  
atraiva mantra-śabdasya mukhyā vṛttir ity abhiprāyeṇa jñeyā.*<sup>8</sup>

"Here “*mantra*” refers to the holy name. A *mantra* in its power depends on faith, but the holy name does not depend on faith. It should be known that the word “*mantra*” is used here while keeping in mind its main meaning.” (6.2.19).

Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is thus simultaneously “*nāma*” (God's name) and “*mantra*.” Therefore it is usually described by the *Caitanya-vaiṣṇava* theologians, including Śrī Caitanya himself (1486-1534)<sup>9</sup>, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>10</sup>, Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī (first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>11</sup>, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838-1914) and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as “*hari-nāma-mahā-mantra*” or “the great mantra of the Lord's names.”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 7.73-74) succinctly explains why the holy name is more important than any mantra:

*kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana  
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa*

“By chanting the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* one can obtain freedom from material existence. By chanting Kṛṣṇa's names one will be able to see the lotus feet of the Lord.

*nāma vinu kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma  
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma, ei śāstra-marma*

“In this Age of Kali there is no religious principle other than the chanting of the holy name, which is the essence of all mantras. This is the purport of all scriptures.”

We see here that the author of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī (16<sup>th</sup> century), particularly mentions “*Kṛṣṇa-mantra*” and “*Kṛṣṇa's name*,” not simply “*hari-nāma*” used in the quotations from Purāṇas above, which is more generic. There is a reason for that also, which contributed to the wide-spread propagation and popularity of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

Although according to tattva or philosophical understanding there is no difference between any forms of Viṣṇu (and thus Hari, Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu are ontologically the same Supreme God), there is a special potency in the name of Kṛṣṇa who, according to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.28) and Caitanya-vaiṣṇava teachings based upon it, is the original form of God (svayaṁ-bhagavān), the source of all other Viṣṇu forms. Several Purāṇas confirm this:

*nāmnām mukhyatamaṁ nāma kṛṣṇākhyam me parantapa*<sup>12</sup>

[Kṛṣṇa speaking to Arjuna]: “O afflicter of enemies, the chief of all names is that of Kṛṣṇa.”

In the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa it is stated:

*sahasra-nāmnām puṇyānām trir āvṛtṭyā tu yat phalam  
ekāvṛtṭyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikaṁ tat prayacchati*<sup>13</sup>

“The result of chanting a thousand names of Viṣṇu three times is attained by chanting one name of Kṛṣṇa only once.” (2.36.19)

The reason behind this excellence of Kṛṣṇa's names is explained in the Padma Purāṇa (Pātāla-khaṇḍa, Mathurā-māhātmya):

*tārakāḥ jāyate muktiḥ prema-bhaktis tu pārakād*<sup>14</sup>

“All other names of Viṣṇu (including Rāma) give *mukti* (liberation), while Kṛṣṇa's names give the love of God (*prema*).”

### **Yuga-dharma, Śrī Caitanya and hari-nāma**

Besides prescribing *yuga-dharma* for each of the four ages Purāṇas also state that Viṣṇu himself comes in every age to institute a particular recommended spiritual process. By collating the following two crucial verses from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrī Caitanya's associates and contemporaries, as well as later *Gauḍīya*-commentators effectively conclude that in Kali-yuga Kṛṣṇa comes in a body of golden color and is no other than Śrī Caitanya:

*āsan varṇās trayo hy asya grhṇato 'nuyugam tanūḥ  
śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḥ*

“Your son Kṛṣṇa appears as an incarnation in every millennium. In the past, He assumed three different colors—white, red and yellow—and now He has appeared in a blackish color. All such incarnations have now assembled in Kṛṣṇa.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.8.13)

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam  
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ*

“In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.32)<sup>15</sup>

Since Viṣṇu had white complexion in Satya-yuga, red in Tretā-yuga and blackish (kṛṣṇa) in Dvāpara-yuga, the only remaining color from the above-mentioned four colors is yellow or golden (*pīta*).

Śrī Caitanya's mission and activities perfectly correspond to the description of the last verse – as stated in his hagiographies he virtually did not do anything which had no relation to *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. It is

due to him and his followers and their preaching that *saṅkīrtana* and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra became universally known. Or, as described in the songs of his later contemporaries, “the mission of *saṅkīrtana* was brought by him from the spiritual world.”<sup>16</sup>

Although Śrī Caitanya is the founder and original propagator of the large-scale chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, still we can trace it to much earlier times and, in fact, even to the ancient Vedic texts. Most of the sources are not very well known and many still remain unpublished. It makes sense that such treatises and even Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra itself weren't widely known before Śrī Caitanya – the *yuga-avatara* of Kṛṣṇa who still had to come with his mission to inaugurate the *yuga-dharma* – *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

### References to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra

The majority of works where Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is mentioned belongs to the category of *vaiṣṇava-āgamas* or *sātvata-tantras*. This is again in accord with the Bhāgavata (11.5.31) which states that in the Kali age the path of *vaiṣṇava-tantras* is prominent:

*iti dvāpara urv-iśa stuvanti jagad-iśvaram  
nānā-tantra-vidhānena kalāv api tathā śṛṇu*

“O King, in this way people in Dvāpara-yuga glorified the Lord of the universe. In Kali-yuga also people worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead by following various regulations of the revealed scriptures. Now kindly hear of this from me.”<sup>17</sup>

Detailed description of the Kali-yuga found in the most Purāṇas sums up to the fact that in this age people are mostly sinful, fallen and do not have the necessary qualification to study the original Vedas (*śruti*). But everyone has a right to study *āgamas* and *vaiṣṇava-tantras*, therefore such an important ingredient of the worship in the age of Kali, Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, is mainly mentioned in such *smṛti* works.

That being said, we still find direct references to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra in several *śruti* texts. One of the most famous examples is the Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad (literally “Knowledge how to cross over the Kali age”), which is the only Upaniṣad that gives the entire Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. This minor Upaniṣad is very short – its prose text, usually divided into three paragraphs, equals to 13 *ślokas* approximately. It belongs to the Kṛṣṇa-yajur-veda and is listed in the Muktikā-canon at number 103. Its summary is as follows: at the end of the Dvāpara-yuga the great sage Nārada approached Brahmā, the creator of the universe, and asked him how one can overcome the evil effects of the imminent Kali-yuga. In reply to his question Brahmā said that one can do so by chanting the name of Nārāyaṇa, the primordial person. While asked again which exactly names should one chant, Brahmā speaks to Nārada the entire Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*iti ṣoḍaśakam nāmnām kali-kalmaṣa-nāśanam  
nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate*<sup>18</sup>

“These sixteen names counteract the evil effects of the Kali-yuga. After searching through all the Vedic literature, one cannot find a method so sublime as the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.”

In the current editions of Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad, however, this mahā-mantra has a reversed reading, with the “Hare Rāma” part coming first. There has been a minor controversy regarding this, which would be impossible to conclusively resolve here, because to do so one must perform a hard task of collecting and collating all the available manuscripts of the upaniṣad. Nevertheless, we can at least mention several opinions regarding this.

The most widely known explanation of this was expressed by Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī (first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) in his book “Śrī Mahā-mantra-vyākhyāṣṭakam”<sup>19</sup>. There he argues that since in Kali-yuga Vedic process of purification does not work and even brāhmaṇas are like sūdras, then not so many people are actually eligible to read śrutis (to which Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad belongs) and practice mantras given therein. At the same time Purāṇas, tantras and āgamas refer to the mahā-mantra as starting with “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” Understanding this, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached the latter version of the mahā-mantra from the āgamas, thus giving everyone the benefit of its chanting and at the same time respecting the rules given in the śrutis regarding the eligibility.

We may never know for sure, but since there is no mention of such reversion in any authoritative source and since we have plenty of evidence that mahā-mantra starts with “Hare Kṛṣṇa,” as we shall see below, this explanation is not completely free from doubts. At any rate, Śrī Caitanya's inversion, if proven or accepted, would be enough at least for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to consider the mantra completely perfect with the “Hare Kṛṣṇa” part first.

Speaking about the order of the mahā-mantra in Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said:

“Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad has been published in Mumbai and Madras, but because [the manuscripts of] the upaniṣad were collected from the adulterated members of the Rāmāyeta-sampradāya, the order of the mahā-mantra in these particular editions was reversed. But even despite being so, its meaning and position cannot be reversed. Any wise person will not accept any order or reading different from the mahā-mantra and its order given by the person denoted by the holy name (nāmi), Śrī Gaurasundara, who himself descended in Kali-yuga to distribute the easy process for crossing over the age of Kali (kali-santarāṇa) and attaining love of God.”<sup>20</sup>

The ancient text of the Ananta-saṁhitā clearly corroborates the śruti evidence found in the Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad, but, more, it corroborates that the mahā-mantra begins with the “Hare Kṛṣṇa” part of the mantra:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*ṣoḍaśaitāni nāmāni dvātriṁśad varṇakāni hi  
kalau yuge mahā-mantraḥ sammato jīvatāraṇe*

*tārakaṁ brahma-nāma itad brahmaṇā guruṇādinā  
kali-santarāṇādyāsu śrutiṣv-adhigataṁ hareḥ*

*prāptaṁ śrī brahma-śiṣyeṇa śrī nāradena dhīmatā  
nāmaitad-uttamaṁ śrauta-pāramparyeṇa brahmaṇaḥ*<sup>21</sup>

“All śāstras agree that the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, which is composed of sixteen names divided into thirty-two syllables, is the great mantra for delivering the jīvas in Kali-yuga. The original guru, Lord Brahmā, received these holy names, which deliver one from material existence, from Lord Hari, as described in the Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad and other śrutis. The intelligent sage Nārada, the disciple of Lord Brahmā, received these highest names by the process of hearing from a spiritual authority.”

Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra's correct order is also defined in Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā:

*hare kṛṣṇau dvir āvṛttau kṛṣṇa tādṛk tathā hare  
hare rāma tathā rāma tathā tādṛk hare punaḥ*

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*<sup>22</sup>

“The words ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’ are to be repeated twice, then ‘Kṛṣṇa’ and ‘Hare’ are to be repeated separately twice. Similarly, ‘Hare Rāma’, ‘Rāma’ and ‘Hare’ are also repeated twice. The mantra will thus be – Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. (Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā, as quoted by Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī in his Gaura-Govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati, verses 132-133).

In practice, however, the question of order is not of primary importance, since as soon as one starts chanting the mantra such differences disappear in the incessant flow of the names. This is confirmed by A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda:

“Either you chant Hare Rāma or you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, it is the same. There is no difference. Sometimes they first of all place "Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare." And sometimes they place "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa..." There is no difference. Sometimes they say, "No, it should be Hare Rāma first." Sometimes they..., "No, Hare Kṛṣṇa." But that is not very important, childish. Any... either you say Hare Rāma or Hare Kṛṣṇa, the same. So this is to be done.”<sup>23</sup>

Another śruti, Caitanyopaniṣad from the Atharva-veda, which was published by Kedāranātha Datta (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) in 1887, also refers to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. What appears to have been a single manuscript of this Upaniṣad was sent to Kedāranātha by a devotee named Madhusūdana Dāsa from Sambalpur, Odisha<sup>24</sup>. Therein Brahmā tells Pippalāda about the upcoming advent of the Supreme Lord as Śrī Caitanya, who will chant the confidential mantra of his own names:

*sa eva mūla-mantram japati harir iti kṛṣṇa iti rāma iti*

“He chants a mūla-mantra consisting of the names Hari, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma.” (Caitanyopaniṣad, 11)<sup>25</sup>.

Here Brahmā clearly alludes to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra by mentioning three names constituting it in the nominative case. And in the following verse he again alludes to it by stating the number of names in it:

*nāmāny aṣṭāv aṣṭa ca śobhanāni, tāni nityam ye japanti dhīrās te vai māyām atitaranti nānyaḥ, paramam mantram parama-rahasyam nityam āvartayati.*

“These two parts of eight names each are very glorious. Those wise persons who always chant them surely cross beyond the illusion of material existence. Others do not. The liberated persons always chant this supreme mantra which is very confidential.” (Caitanyopaniṣad, 14)<sup>26</sup>.

References to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra from a number of Purāṇas are quoted in the post-Caitanya works. Unfortunately not all of them can be traced to the current editions of these Purāṇas.

For example, Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī in his *paddhati* (manual for mediation and worship) quotes Padma-Purāṇa:

*dvātriṁśad akṣaram mantram nāma ṣoḍaśakāṇvitam  
prajapan vaiṣṇavo nityam rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sthalaṁ labhet*

“A vaiṣṇava who constantly chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, composed of sixteen names divided into thirty-two syllables, will certainly attain the abode of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.” (Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇāṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-smaraṇa-kṛāma-paddhatiḥ 161)<sup>27</sup>.

Nayanānanda Ṭhākura quotes Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa in his Kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-kadamba (A.D. 1730):

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
iti japtvā pramucyeta pātakā nātra saṁśayaḥ*

“Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.”

“Any sinful person who chants these holy names is at once liberated. There is no doubt about it.”

And Agni Purāṇa:

*hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare  
śvapaco'pi japan nityaṁ mucyate śṛnu bhārgava*<sup>28</sup>:

“Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.”

“O Bhārgava! If a dog eater constantly chants these holy names he will be liberated.” (Kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-kadamba, chapter 6).

Agni Purāṇa also states:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
raṭanti helayā vāpi te kṛtārthā na saṁśayaḥ*<sup>29</sup>

“Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.”

“Whoever chants this mantra, even neglectfully, will attain the supreme goal of life. Of this there is no doubt.”

Rādhā-hṛdaya, which is of *tāntrika* outlook and is said to once have been a part of Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa mentions entire Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter there is a conversation between king Vṛsabhānu and Kratu Muni. The king after performing severe penances for many years hears a celestial voice (*vāk aśārīriṇī*) that instructs him to take to the chanting of Hari's names. When he asks which names exactly should he chant, the demigoddess sends him to a sage named Kratu who lives nearby deeply immersed in meditation. The king approaches the sage and asks him for harināma. The sage gives him *harināma-mantra* and at this moment Lomaharṣaṇa Sūta interrupts Vedavyāsa's narration and requests him to repeat the mantra given by Kratu to Vṛsabhānu:

*yat tvayā kīrtitaṁ nātha hari-nāmeti saṁjñitam  
mantraṁ brahma-padaṁ siddhi-karaṁ tad vada no vibho*

“O powerful sage! You glorified the mantra called “hari-nāma,” please instruct me in this spiritual vibration that bestows all perfection.”

In reply, Śrī Vedavyāsa gives the following instruction:

*grahaṇād yasya mantrasya dehī brahma-mayo bhavet  
sadyaḥ pūtaḥ surā-po 'pi sarva-siddhi-yuto bhavet  
tad ahaṁ te 'bhidhāsyāmi mahā-bhāgavato hy asi*

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*ity aṣṭa-śatakaṁ nāmnāṁ tri-kāla-kalmaṣāpy aham  
nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva-vedeṣu vidyate*<sup>30</sup>

“I will certainly instruct you, a great devotee, in that mantra by which an embodied soul can be liberated and even a drunkard can quickly become purified and attain all perfection. *Hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*. By chanting this mantra one hundred and eight times thrice a day destroys all sins. In all the Vedas there is no other method for achieving liberation from material bondage.” (Rādhā-hṛdaya 6.52-56).

In the āgamas such as the Brahma-yāmala, Lord Śiva describes the mahā-mantra as follows:

*hariṁ vinā nāsti kiñcit pāpa-nistārakaṁ kalau  
tasmāl lokoddhāraṇārthaṁ hari-nāma prakāśayet*

*sarvatra mucyate loko mahā-pāpāt kalau yuge  
hare-kṛṣṇa-pada-dvandvaṁ kṛṣṇeti ca pada-dvayam*

*tathā hare-pada-dvandvaṁ hare-rāma iti dvayam  
tad-ante ca mahā-devi rāma rāma dvayaṁ vadet*

*hare hare tato brūyād dhari-nāma samuddharet  
mahā-mantraṁ ca kṛṣṇasya sarva-pāpa-praṇāśakam<sup>31</sup>*

“Without Hari there is no other way to eradicate the sins in the age of Kali. Therefore hari-nāma should be revealed in order to save the world. The people in Kali-yuga everywhere can be liberated from the greatest sins by chanting the following mantra. First one should chant two words “Hare Kṛṣṇa” twice and then two words more - “Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa.” Then one should chant two words “Hare Hare” and then twice “Hare Rāma.” In the end, Mahādevī, one should chant “Rāma Rāma” and then “Hare Hare.” In this way one should pronounce the mahā-mantra of Lord Kṛṣṇa which destroys all sins.”

In the Rādhā-tantra from Vāsudeva-māhātmya Vāsudeva says to Tripura Devī:

*śṛṇu mātara mahā-māye viśva-bīja-svarūpiṇi  
hari-nāmno mahāmāye krāmaṁ vada sureśvari*

“Listen, o mother, personification of Mahā-māyā and the seed of the universe! Please explain to me the sequence of the mahā-mantra.”

In response to this, Tripurā Devī says:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*dvātriṁśad-akṣarāṇy evaṁ kalau nāmāni sarvadā  
śṛṇu cchandaḥ suta-śreṣṭha hari-nāmaṇaḥ sadaiva hi<sup>32</sup>*

“O best among sons! These thirty-two syllables save everyone in Kali-yuga. Now please hear from me about the meter of this mantra etc.” (Rādhā-tantra 2.8-10).

Some of the current editions of Purāṇas also refer to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra:

*īśvara uvāca—  
harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam  
hare rāma hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti maṅgalam  
evaṁ vadanti ye nityaṁ na hi tāt bādhathe kaliḥ<sup>33</sup>*

Lord Śiva said:

“Kali does not harass those who only chant the holy names of Hari always or the auspicious vibrations like “Hare Rāma”, “Hare Kṛṣṇa” and “Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa.” (Padma Purāṇa, Pātāla-khaṇḍa 80. 2-3).

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa bhakta-vatsala gopate  
śaraṇya bhagavan viṣṇo mām pāhi bahu-saṁsrteḥ<sup>34</sup>*

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa! O Lord, who is affectionate to his devotees! O one who protects cows! O my



shelter! O Lord Viṣṇu! Please protect me from the various tribulations in the material existence.” (Pātāla-khaṇḍa 19.25-26 (Puruṣottama-māhātmya)).

*upabhuja sa-dharmātmā svairam vigata-vikriyaḥ  
hare rāma hare kṛṣṇa japann iti jagāma ha<sup>35</sup>*

That pious person, free from anxiety, went away while chanting “Hare Rāma, Hare Kṛṣṇa.” (Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa 204.108)

### **Evidence that Śrī Caitanya chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra**

Śrī Caitanya's hagiographies have numerous mentions that he himself chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra and instructed others to chant it. For example, the very first authentic biography, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta (ca. 1533-1542) or simply Murāri-gupter kaḍacā by Murāri Gupta, an early associate of Śrī Caitanya, states:

*gr̥he vasan prema-vibhinna-dhairyaṁ  
rudaty alaṁ rauti muhur muhuḥ svanaīḥ  
sa vepathur gadgadayā girā lapaty  
alaṁ hare kṛṣṇa hare mudā kvacit<sup>36</sup>*

While dwelling in his home, his gravity was sometimes broken by his sentiments of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At times He would weep, at other times He would repeatedly make thundering sounds. At times his body trembled and at other times he would joyously utter with faltering voice, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare..."<sup>37</sup> (1.16.12)

The first Bengali biography, Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata by Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura (ca. 1550) contains several references to Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra:

*jaya jaya 'hare-kṛṣṇa'-mantrera prakāśa  
jaya jaya nija-bhakti-grahaṇa-vilāsa*

Glory to he who revealed the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra! Glory to he who enjoys the pastimes of accepting his own devotional service. (Madhya-khaṇḍa 6.117)

*prasanna śrī-mukhe 'hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa' bali'  
vijaya hailā gauracandra kutūhali*

“Happily chanting “Hare Kṛṣṇa” and “Kṛṣṇa” Gauracandra was joyful when he came.” (Antya-khaṇḍa 7.142).

*“hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa” bali' prema-sukhe  
pratyakṣa hailā āsi' advaita-sammukhe*

“The Lord was chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra in ecstatic love as He came before Advaita.” (Antya-khaṇḍa 9.46).

There are two instances when Śrī Caitanya pronounces the entire mantra while instructing other to chant it:

- 1) When answering Tapana Miśra's question regarding sādhyā (goal of life) and sādhana (process of attaining the goal of life) in Eastern Bengal:

*sādhyā-sādhana-tattva ye kichu sakala  
hari-nāma-saṅkīrtane milibe sakala*

“In the chanting of the holy names you will achieve everything, including the goal of life and the process for attaining it.

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“For spiritual progress in this Age of Kali, there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative to the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.”

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*ei śloka nāma bali' laya mahā-mantra  
śola-nāma batriśa-akṣara ei tantra*

“This verse consists of the holy names and is called the mahā-mantra. It contains sixteen names composed of thirty-two syllables.”

*sādhite sādhite yabe premāṅkura habe  
sādhya-sādhana-tattva jānibā se tabe”*

“By continually chanting this mahā-mantra the seed of love of God will sprout in your heart. Then you will understand the goal of life and the process for achieving it.” (Ādi-khaṇḍa 14.143-147).

2) When speaking to the inhabitants of Navadvīpa:

*prabhu bale,—“kṛṣṇa-bhakti hauka sabāra  
kṛṣṇa-nāma-guṇa bai nā baliha āra”*

The Lord said: “May you all attain devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Do not speak about anything other than the names and qualities of Kṛṣṇa.”

*āpane sabāre prabhu kare upadeśe  
“kṛṣṇa-nāma mahā-mantra śunaha hariṣe*

The Lord personally instructed everyone: “Happily hear the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare”*

*prabhu bale,—“kahilāṇa ei mahā-mantra  
ihā japa' giyā sabe kariyā nirbandha*

The Lord said: “I have told you the mahā-mantra. All of you chant this mantra according to a prescribed number.”

*ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra  
sarva-kṣaṇa bala' ithe vidhi nāhi āra*

“Everyone will attain all perfection by it. At every moment chant it, there is no other rule.”

*prabhu-mukhe mantra pāi' sabāra ullāsa  
daṇḍavat kari' sabe cale nija-vāsa*

Everyone became joyful after receiving this mantra from the Lord's mouth. After offering obeisances they all returned to their respective homes. (Madhya 23.74-78, 82).

These instructions to the resident of Navadvīpa are also related in Narahari Cakravartī's Bhakti-ratnākara (12.2047-2054) where Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is also recorded in its entirety (12.2049).

Another biography, Caitanya-maṅgala by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura (ca. 1560s), describes the meeting of devotees headed by Śrī Caitanya with a toll-collector on their way to Purī. After seeing Śrī Caitanya toll-collector started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra:

*jharajhara nayana -- pulaka kalevara  
hare-kṛṣṇa-nāma sei bole nirantara*<sup>38</sup>

“Tears flowed from his eyes. The hairs of his body stood erect. He incessantly chanted the holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.” (Madhya-khaṇḍa, Prabhura Nīlacala gamana o daṇḍa-bhaṅga-līlā, 114).

Besides biographers, there are many of Śrī Caitanya's direct associates who mention him chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Below are some quotes from their works.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta (17.89):

*hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti mukhyān  
mahāścārya-nāmāvalī-siddha-mantrān  
kṛpā-mūrti-caitanyadevopagotān  
kadābhyasya vṛndāvane syām kṛtārthaḥ*

When will I attain all perfection of life in Vṛndavana by chanting the *siddha-mantra* of very wonderful names “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!” that came from the mouth of Lord Caitanya, who is compassion personified?

Caitanya-candrāmṛta (16) of the same author:

*badhnan prema-bhara-prakampita-karo granthīn kaṭi-ḍorakaiḥ  
saṅkhyātum nija-loka-maṅgala-hare-kṛṣṇeti-nāmnām japan  
āśru-snāta-mukhaḥ svam eva hi jagannāthaṁ didṛkṣur gatā-  
yātair gaura-tanur vilocana-mudaṁ tanvan hariḥ pātu vaḥ*<sup>39</sup>

“Chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, His own holy names which bring auspiciousness to the world, His hand trembling with love as He touches the knotted string about His waist to count the number of names, His face bathed in tears as He comes and goes, eager to see His own form of Lord Jagannatha, and bringing great delight to the eyes of all, may the golden form of Lord Hari protect you all.”<sup>40</sup>

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya's Śrī Caitanya-śataka:

*aṇu-brahmāṇḍayor madhye caitanyena samāhṛtām  
hare-kṛṣṇa-rāma-nāma-mālām bhakti-pradāyinīm*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya has offered everyone in the universe the garland of the holy names “Hare,” “Kṛṣṇa,” and “Rāma” and thereby taken away their sins. (verse 79).

Rūpa Gosvāmī's Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta:

*śrī-caitanya-mukhodgīrṇā hare-kṛṣṇeti-varṇakāḥ  
majjayanto jagat premṇi vijayantam tad-āhvayāḥ*<sup>41</sup>

Glory to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, the Lord's names emanated from Śrī Caitanya's mouth, which drown the world in pure love! (Pūrva 1.4).

Commenting on this verse, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century), writes:

*hare kṛṣṇeti - iti-śabda ādy-arthaḥ, "iti hetu-prakaraṇa-prakāśādi-samāptiṣu" ity amarokteḥ, tena dvātriṃśad-akṣaro nāma-mantra bodhyate*<sup>42</sup>.

"Here *iti* in “Hare-kṛṣṇa *iti*” means “beginning.” Amara-koṣa says: *iti* indicates cause, a topic, explanation, beginning and an end." Thus it indicates the whole nāma-mantra consisting of thirty-two syllables."

Rūpa Gosvāmī's Stavamālā:

*hare kṛṣṇety-uccaiḥ sphurita-rasano nama-gaṇana-  
kṛta-granthi-śreṇī-subhaga-kaṭi-sutrojjvala-karaḥ  
viśalakṣo dīrghargala-yugala-khelañcita-bhujah  
sa caitanyaḥ kiṁ me punar api dṛśor yasyati padam*<sup>43</sup>

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chants “Hare Kṛṣṇa” in a loud voice, the holy name dancing on His tongue as He counts the number of recitations with His effulgent hand. His eyes are large, and His long arms. bending as He performs His pastimes, reach down to His knees. Will He again become visible before the path of my eyes? (Prathama-caitanyāṣṭaka 5).

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa writes in his commentary on this verse:

*hare kṛṣṇeti mantra-pratika-grahaṇaṁ soḍaśa-nāmātmanā dvātriṃśad-aksareṇa mantreṇocair-uccāritena  
sphuritā kṛta-nṛtyā rasanā jīhvā yasya saḥ*<sup>44</sup>.

“‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’ means that mantra was resounding in his mouth. He was uttering the mantra consisting of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables. “Uccaiḥ” means that he was pronouncing it in a loud voice and it was dancing on his tongue.”

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Stavāvalī:

*nijatve gaudīyān jagati pariḡrhya prabhur imān  
hare-kṛṣṇety evaṁ gaṇana-vidhinā kīrtayata bhoḥ  
itiprāyaṁ śikṣāṁ janaka iva tebhyaḥ paridiśan  
śacī-sūnuḥ kiṁ me nayana-saraṇīm yāsyati punaḥ*<sup>45</sup>.

Will Śacī's son who, accepting the people of Bengal as his own and teaching them as a father, said, "Please chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra a fixed number of times," again walk on the pathway of my eyes? (Śrī Caitanyāṣṭaka 5)<sup>46</sup>.

Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is also discussed in Śrī Bhakti-candrikā, which is a collections of instructions that are said to have been spoken by Śrī Caitanya's close associate Narahari Sarakāra and collected by his disciple Lokānanda Ācārya. Chapter 7 of the book is devoted to Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra<sup>47</sup>.

A Sanskrit biography of Śrī Caitanya by an Oriya poet Govindadeva named Gaura-kṛṣṇodaya (A.D. 1758) describes Śrī Caitanya's deep ecstasy in the last years of his life in Purī:

*nīśamya tat-krandita-vāk karambitaṁ  
gabhīra-ghoṣaṁ naga-bhitti-bṛmhitam  
vadan harekṛṣṇa sa dattavān mudam  
mahattamebhyas tad-avastha utthitaḥ*<sup>48</sup>

“Hearing their crying mixed with tumultuous sounds, similar to elephant's roar that splits rocks, he woke up from that state and said “Hare Kṛṣṇa”, thus giving joy to his greatest associates.” (17.60).

Nayanānanda Ṭhākura in his Kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-kadamba (1730) writes<sup>49</sup>:

*hari kṛṣṇa rāma – ei ekatre smaraṇa  
sahasra aśvamedha nahe tāhāra sama*

The result one obtains by remembering the holy names of Hari, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma together is not equal to performing thousands of horse sacrifices.

*yathā brhad-vaśiṣṭha-saṁhitāyām-  
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti rāmeti harīty uktvā tataḥ param  
rājasūya-sahasrāṇām phalam āpnoti mānavaḥ*

In Brhad-Vaśiṣṭha-saṁhitā it is stated: If a person chants the names of the supreme Lord such as Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and Hari, he obtains more results than performing thousands of rājasūya sacrifices.

*ataeva mahāprabhu śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya  
tina nāma prakāśiyā jagat kaila dhanya*

Therefore Mahāprabhu Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya has made the world fortunate by manifesting the three names Hare, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma.

*hare kṛṣṇa rāma – ei nāma-yajña sāra  
kali-yuge mahāprabhu karilā pracāra*

In Kali-yuga Śrī Caitanya preached that the essence of all sacrifices is the chanting of the holy names of Hare, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. (Chapetr 6)

### **Śrī Caitanya's followers also chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī (ca. 1615) states that one of Śrī Caitanya's associates in Purī, Vāṇīnātha Paṭṭanāyaka, was chanting mahā-mantra while under arrest:

*se kahe—“vāṇīnātha nirbhaye laya kṛṣṇa-nāma  
'hare kṛṣṇa, hare kṛṣṇa' kahe aviśrāma*

The messenger said: “Vāṇīnātha without any fear incessantly chants Kṛṣṇa's names - “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa...” (Antya 9.56).

Nityānanda Dāsa's Prema-vilāsa (first part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) mentions mahā-mantra several times:

In the fourth chapter regarding Viṣṇupriyā Devī's strict sādhana after Śrī Caitanya took sannyāsa:

*ekabāra jape ṣola-nāma batriśa akṣara  
eka taṇḍula rākhena pātre ānanda antara*

*tr̥tīya-prahara paryanta layena hari-nāma  
tāte ye taṇḍula haya laiṇā pāke yāna<sup>50</sup>*

“After each mantra of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables she would blissfully place one grain of rice in the empty bowl. She chanted holy name till afternoon and then she would cook the rice accumulated in the bowl.”

And in the fourteenth chapter regarding the initiation of Govinda Kavirāja by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya:

*rāmacandra kole kari baise āpanāra  
prabhu 'harekṛṣṇa' mantra karṇe dilā tāra<sup>51</sup>*

"Rāmacandra sat and took his brother on his lap. Then Śrīnivāsa chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra into his ears."

After this Śrīnivāsa gave him also a kṛṣṇa-mantra and a rādhā-mantra.

Karṇānanda of Yadunandana Dāsa (ca. 1610) describes the ecstasy that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī experienced in the following way:

*hare kṛṣṇa nāma mātra jihvāya uccārite  
ha ha ha ha śabde yāra kare avirate<sup>52</sup>*

"As soon as he tried to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra with his tongue, he could only utter sounds "ha, ha", "ha, ha" after which he fainted." (5.152).

Śrī Gopījanavallabha Dāsa's Rasika-maṅgala (the biography of Śrī Rasikānanda, the chief disciple of the famous Śyāmānanda Prabhu, written in the second half of 17<sup>th</sup> century) also has numerous references to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra:

In the Eastern part, chapter 2, Śyāmānanda's guru Hṛdayānanda orders him:

*tāre laye sarva-jīve kara prema-dāna  
caitanyera ājñā hare kṛṣṇa ṣola nāma<sup>53</sup>*

"Taking the order of Śrī Caitanya in the form of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra of sixteen names, give the love of God to all living entities."

Eastern part, chapter 7:

*hare kṛṣṇa nāma dilā acyutera sthāne  
pratyakṣe kahila saba tāra vivaraṇe<sup>54</sup>*

"[Dayāla Dāsi] gave Rasikānanda Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and personally told Acyuta everything about him."

In the same place:

*kona dina āsana kariyā baise dhyāne  
hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra karena smaraṇe<sup>55</sup>*

"One day Rasikānanda was sitting in meditation remembering Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra."

Southern part, chapter 1:

*kole kari' devakīre śyāmānanda rāya  
'hare kṛṣṇa' ṣola nāma tāhāre śunāya<sup>56</sup>*

"Taking Devakī [Rasikānanda's daughter] on his lap, Śyāmānanda chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra of sixteen names into her ears."

Western part, chapter 8:

*hare kṛṣṇa ṣola nāma batriśa akṣara  
hastī karṇe śunāila rasika śekhara<sup>57</sup>*

"The best of rasika-devotees [Rasikānanda] chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables into its ear."

Bhakti-ratnākara of Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura (early 18<sup>th</sup> century) also mentions Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra several times.

*keha kahe – harināma mahāmantra dāne  
jīvera dāruṇa duḥkha khaṇḍaye āpane*

*tathāhi–  
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*keha kahe – hari-kṛṣṇa rāma-nāmākṣare  
prasave adbhuta artha svāde vijñavare<sup>58</sup>*

Some people said: "By giving them the mahā-mantra of Lord Hari's holy names, the Lord personally destroys the terrible sufferings of the conditioned souls.

[This mahā-mantra is] Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Another person said: "The syllables of the names Hari, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma contain wonderful import and the best of wise men relishes them." (5.2212-2214)

### **Dikṣā, puraścaraṇa and hari-nāma**

According to the numerous statements in the Gaudīya literature, hari-nāma-mahā-mantra does not depend upon such related to mantra procedures as puraścaraṇa and even dikṣā (initiation):

*dikṣā-puraścaryā-vidhi apekṣā nā kare  
jihvā-sparśe ā-caṇḍāla sabāre uddhāre*

"The holy name does not depend upon initiation or the activities required before initiation. As soon as it touches the tongue, it delivers everyone, even a caṇḍāla." (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 15.108)

Puraścaryā (or puraścaraṇa) is a prescribed method for purifying mantras before being used. This term is a combination of *purāḥ* ("before") and *caryā* ("activities"). It is described in various vaiṣṇava literature. For instance Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (17.11-12) quoting Agastya-saṁhitā says:

*pūjā traikālīkī nityaṁ japas tarpaṇam eva ca  
homo brāhmaṇa-bhuktiś ca puraścaraṇam ucyate*

*guror labdhasya mantrasya prasādena yathā-vidhi  
pañcāṅgopāsana-siddhyai purāś caitad vidhīyate<sup>59</sup>*

"In the morning, afternoon and evening, one should worship the Deity, chant the mantra, offer oblations, perform a fire sacrifice, and feed the brāhmaṇas. These five activities constitute *puraścaryā*. To attain full success when taking initiation from the spiritual master, one should first perform these five processes of worship."

In the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (17.4–5, 7) it is also stated:

*vinā yena na siddhaḥ syān mantra varṣa-śatair api  
kṛtena yena labhate sādḥako vāñchitaṁ phalam*

*puraścaraṇa-sampanno mantra hi phala-dhāyakaḥ  
ataḥ puraṣkriyāṁ kuryāt mantra-vit siddhi-kaṅkṣayā*

*puraṣkriyā hi mantrāṇāṁ pradhānaṁ vīryam ucyate  
vīrya-hīno yathā dehī sarva-karmasu na kṣamaḥ  
puraścaraṇa-hīno hi tathā mantraḥ prakīrtitaḥ<sup>60</sup>*

“Without performing the puraścaryā activities, one cannot become perfect even by chanting this mantra for hundreds of years. But one who has undergone the puraścaryā-vidhi process can attain success very easily. If one wishes to perfect his initiation, he must first undergo the puraścaryā activities. The puraścaryā process is the life force by which one is successful in chanting the mantra. Without the life force, one cannot do anything; similarly, without the life force of puraścaryā-vidhi, no mantra can be perfected.”<sup>61</sup>

But as has already been seen above, hari-nāma-mantra itself destroys one's sins and gives liberation (*mukti*) which cannot be achieved by any *puraścaraṇa* ritual and thus it does not depend upon the latter. Śrī Caitanya confirm this in his conversation with the Kulīna-grāma residents:

*anuṣaṅga-phale kare saṁsārera kṣaya  
citta ākarṣiyā karāya kṛṣṇe premodaya*

The destruction of the material bondage is a side effect of the chanting of the holy name. [While its main effect is that] it attracts one's mind to Kṛṣṇa and awakens one's love for him. (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 15.109)

Thus hari-nāma is accessible to one and all:

*ākṛṣṭiḥ kṛta-cetasāṁ su-manasāṁ uccāṭanaṁ cāmhasāṁ  
ācaṇḍālam amūka-loka-sulabho vaśyaś ca mukti-śriyaḥ  
no dīkṣāṁ na ca sat-kriyāṁ na ca puraścaryāṁ manāg īkṣate  
mantra 'yam rasanā-sprg eva phalati śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakaḥ<sup>62</sup>*

“The holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is an attractive feature for many saintly, liberal people. It is the annihilator of all sinful reactions and is so powerful that, save for the dumb who cannot chant it, it is readily available to everyone, including the lowest type of man, the caṇḍāla. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the controller of the opulence of liberation, and it is identical with Kṛṣṇa. When a person simply chants the holy name with his tongue, immediate effects are produced. Chanting the holy name does not depend on initiation, pious activities or the puraścaryā regulative principles generally observed before initiation. The holy name does not wait for any of these activities. It is self-sufficient.” (Padyāvalī 29)<sup>63</sup>.

Dīkṣā is defined by the vaiṣṇava-āgamas as:

*divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam  
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ<sup>64</sup>*

“Dīkṣā gives transcendental knowledge and vanquishes sinful reactions. Persons who know the spiritual science call such process 'dīkṣā.'”

What follows from the above statements and especially from the Caitanya-caritāmṛta verse (Ādi 7.73),



is that the hari-nāma-mantra gives exactly these results: it destroys one's sins (as a side effect – this is “*saṁsāra-mocana*”) and gives one transcendental knowledge of relationship with Kṛṣṇa (as the main result – “*kṛṣṇera caraṇa*”). Thus anyone can take to the chanting of Hari-nāma and get the results even without having undergone the process of mantra-dīkṣā (*pāñcarātriḥ-dīkṣā*).

However, there is a more subtle consideration here, which is mentioned by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his commentary on Śrīmad-bhāgavatam (6.2.9-10) which further clarifies the importance of guru and dīkṣā:

“Those persons who are offenders against the Lord’s name but have no tendencies of *karma*, *jñāna*, and so on, are engaged in performing devotional service by hearing, chanting, and so on, yet have not received initiation because they have not taken shelter at the lotus feet of a *guru*—they also should be called by the name Vaiṣṇava. Indeed, the word Vaiṣṇava can be understood as derived by the *sūtra* [of Pāṇini’s grammar] *sāsyā devatā* (“that is his Deity”) or else by the *sūtra* that reads *bhaktiḥ* (“that is his object of devotion”); thus those who by their initiation have made Viṣṇu their Deity and also those who by their practice of worship have made Viṣṇu their object of worship are both called Vaiṣṇavas, since there is no other term to properly describe them. For these Vaiṣṇavas also, as for the ones described before, there is no fall into hell and so on; such is the opinion of some. But this opinion is not very cogent; since it is said in the verse beginning *nṛ-deham ādyam* that the *guru* is the pilot of the ship, they cannot easily obtain the Supreme Lord without a *guru*. Therefore it is said that only those saintly persons who in a previous lifetime had achieved the shelter of the feet of a *guru* can merely by the power of their worship obtain the Personality of Godhead; one cannot otherwise obtain the Supreme Lord just by his devotion.”

“Well, we see that even Ajāmila, who hadn’t taken shelter of a *guru*, easily obtained the Supreme Lord. So this should be explained as follows: Those who like cows and asses simply graze their senses on objects of gratification and have no idea even in their dreams of who is God, what is devotion, and what is a *guru* can like Ajāmila and others who uttered the names of Lord Hari be saved by *bhakti* alone even without a *guru* by the method of *nāmābhāsa* and what it involves. Lord Hari alone is the proper object of worship, devotional worship is the means of obtaining Him, the *guru* is the proper person to give instruction about these matters, and in the past it was devotees instructed by *gurus* alone who obtained Lord Hari—even if one can make these specific discriminations, he may adopt the viewpoint of such scriptural evidence as the statement “There is no need to pay any regard to initiation, proper rituals being performed, or preliminary purification. This *mantra* consisting of the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa bears fruit simply by touching one’s tongue” and take the examples of Ajāmila and others like him to decide “Why do I have to take the trouble of accepting a *guru*? I can expect to obtain the Supreme Lord simply by *nāma-kīrtana* and other devotional practices.” But then, because of his grievous offence, namely that of disregarding the *guru*, He cannot obtain the Supreme Lord. Rather only when in the same life or the next life his offense is dispelled can he take shelter of a divine spiritual master and obtain the Lord.”<sup>65</sup> (end of commentary).

Thus, anyone can attain perfection by chanting of the holy names, however, if a person deliberately avoids surrendering to guru and being disciplined by him, he commits an offense and will not get the result of his chanting.

Commenting on the chant given by Śrī Caitanya to his students, which has the holy names in the dative case and “*namaḥ*” word as well the names in the vocative case – “*hare haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ, gopāla govinda rāma śrī-madhusūdana*” – Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī writes:

“Here first of all two holy names – Hari and Yādava – are combined with the dative case, which is indicative of seeking shelter (*śaraṇāgati*) and self-surrender (*ātma-sampradāna*). In other words, a person desiring to receive the name of Kṛṣṇa should first of all receive the transcendental knowledge (*divya-jñāna*) from a true guru, who has taken a solemn vow to chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, after surrendering unto him. Then he should incessantly hear about the holy names of Kṛṣṇa from the guru and Vaiṣṇavas and then he should himself cultivate the loud, offenseless and incessant chanting of

Kṛṣṇa's holy names calling out to Him.

If one wants to sincerely worship the Lord by surrendering oneself to Him and by using the dative case, which is indicative of surrender, combined with the Lord's names, then one receives mantra; and when one chants the holy name using the vocative case, then one worships the holy names. Names ending in the dative case indicate seeking shelter and the holy names in the vocative case indicate the chanter's desire for eternal service. One who has received initiation is released from the bondage of material existence by chanting mantra; one's calling out to the person denoted by mantra is an inherent manifestation of one's eternal worship. Knowing that kṛṣṇa-mantra is a *sādhana* (process of devotional service) and kṛṣṇa-nāma is both *sādhana* and *sādhya* (the goal of such process), one accepts that both *sādhya* and *sādhana* are non-different and are both belong to the category of uninterrupted devotional service. Mantra and the holy name are non-different from one another vibrations denoting Lord Viṣṇu, the object of such vibrations. The chanting of mantra is meant to receive the knowledge of one's relationship with the Lord and when one achieves perfection in chanting mantras, then begins the bhajana of such liberated soul. In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 7.73) it is stated: '*kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana, kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa*' - 'By chanting the Kṛṣṇa-mantra one can obtain freedom from material existence. By chanting Kṛṣṇa's names one will be able to see the lotus feet of the Lord.'"<sup>66</sup>.

The process of receiving the shelter of the guru and instructions on how to chant the holy name successfully has come to be known as hari-nāma-dīkṣā (hari-nāma initiation).

One can find instances of such initiation into the holy names in the śāstra. For example, in the above-mentioned conversation from the Rādhā-hṛdaya king Vṛṣabhānu tells Kratu Muni:

*nāsty alabhyaṁ tri-bhuvane prasanne tvayi me vibho  
dehi me hari-nāmani yadi te 'nugraho mayi*

“There is nothing unattainable in the three worlds for me if there is you mercy upon me. Kindly give me the names of Lord Hari, if you are pleased to do so”. (6.49)

*brahmavāca -  
prasannārūṇa-pāthojānanaḥ sa muni-sattamaḥ  
prapannāya prasanno 'dād dhari-nāmāny anukramāt*

“Brahmā continued: Then the best of all sages, whose face was beautiful like blossoming reddish lotus, being satisfied with the king, who took shelter of him, gave him the holy names of Lord Hari along with the instructions how to chant it”. (6.51)

Later in the text after the glorification of the hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana we find the following statement:

*vedavyāsa uvāca -  
iti mantraṁ pradāyaiva tadā sa bhagavān kratuḥ  
idam āha vacaḥ pathyaṁ bhūyo harim anusmaran*

“Vedavyāsa said: After giving him the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra highly powerful sage Kratu, remembering Hari, then again spoke the suitable words.” (6.64)

It should be noted here that the texts speaks of the holy names (actually the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, as has already been seen above) as “mantra” and it is received from a guru just like any other mantra during dīkṣā. It is also remarkable that in his Bengali translation of these verses Nandakumar Kaviratna Bhattacharya uses the words “hari-nāma-dīkṣā”.<sup>67</sup>

Also, Nārada-pañcarātra (Jñānāmṛta-sāra) prescribes giving Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra to a disciple before initiating him with the *gopāla-mantra*:

*śiṣyasyodaṇmukha-sthasya harer nāmāni ṣoḍaśa  
saṁśrāvyaiḥ tato dadyān mantraṁ trai-lokya-maṅgalam*

“The guru should first recite the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra consisting of sixteen names to the disciple, facing north. After that he should give him the dīkṣā-mantra, which brings auspiciousness to the three worlds.”<sup>68</sup>

One can find mentions of such initiation in several Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava writings. For example, Prema-vilāsa (ca. 1610s) describes king Vīrahamvīra's initiation by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya:

*ṭhākura kahena baisa śuna kṛṣṇa-nāma  
ye ājñā baliyā rājā pātilena kāna*

*nikaṭe basāṣā rājāya kahe harināma  
mahā-mantra hari nāma karila pradāna*<sup>69</sup>

“After bathing, Śrīnivāsa ordered the king to take a seat near him. He then chanted the hari-nāma-mahā-mantra into the ear of the king.”

It appears from the verses following these that this was only the "first" initiation of Vīrahamvīra, the mantra-dīkṣā happened some days after this.

Also, Karṇānanda of Yadunandana Dāsa (ca. 1610s) describes initiation of king Vīrahamvīra's wife in a similar way:

*āge harināma mantra karā-i śravaṇa  
tabe to yugala-mantra karāya grahaṇa*<sup>70</sup>

“Śrīnivāsa first made her hear the holy name and then gave her Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa mantra.” (Karṇānanda 1.337)

At the same time hari-nāma-dīkṣā is not identical with the mantra-dīkṣā proper (*pāñcarātrika-dīkṣā*), thus many present-day Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇavas undergo both of them and this is not considered punar-dīkṣā (reinitiation), which is forbidden by śāstra<sup>71</sup>.

Grammatically *dīkṣā* is derived from a verbal root *dīkṣ* which has the following meanings: *dīkṣ* – *mauṇḍyejyopāyana-niyama-vratādeṣeṣu*<sup>72</sup> – “‘dīkṣ’ means “to shave”, “to sacrifice”, “to give the sacred tread”, “to practice self restraint”, “to follow a vow”, “to order.”

“Dīkṣā” is one of the principal terms used in the Vedas which denotes initiation into performing a sacrifice (*yajña*)<sup>73</sup>. It is interesting to note that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.32) and a number of Śrī Caitanya's biographies repeatedly proclaim hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana to be the yajña prescribed for the Kali age:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam  
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ*

"In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions."<sup>74</sup>

This idea is explicitly stated many times in Murāri Gupta's Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta:

*taṁ vai bibharṣi garbhe tvaṁ yo yajñaṁ prathayiṣyati  
kīrtanākhyāṁ mahā-puṇyāṁ yad yajñair nopapadyate*<sup>75</sup>

"In your womb You bear He who will spread the process of yajña named saṅkīrtana. This yajña has great purificatory potency unobtainable through the Vedic process of yajña." (1.5.10)

*avatīrṇo'si bhagavan lokānām prema-siddhaye  
khedaṁ mā kuru yajño'yaṁ kīrtanākhyāḥ kṣitau kalau  
tvat-prasādāt susampanno bhaviṣyati na saṁśayaḥ*<sup>76</sup>

"O Lord! You have descended to bring people the love of God. Do not be despondent. This sacrifice of the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names on the earth in this age of Kali will be supremely successful by Your mercy. Of this there is no doubt." (2.2.9-10)

*evaṁ dināntaṁ sa nināya yajña-bhuk  
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtanakair jagad-dhitaiḥ*<sup>77</sup>

"Thus did the Lord, the enjoyer of all sacrifice, pass His time until the day's end in the sublime sacrifice of saṅkīrtana, for the benefit of all living entities." (2.14.17).

And also in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:

*saṅkīrtana-pravartaka śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya  
saṅkīrtana-yajñe tāñre bhaje, sei dhanya*

"Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is the initiator of saṅkīrtana [congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord]. One who worships Him through saṅkīrtana is fortunate indeed." (Ādi 3.77)<sup>78</sup>.

From Caitanya-maṅgala:

*dhanya dhanya kali-yuga – yugera upari  
saṅkīrtana yajñe sabhe hailā adhikārī*<sup>79</sup>.

"Fortunate, fortunate is this Kali-yuga. It stands above all other yugas. In this yuga everyone became eligible to perform the saṅkīrtana-yajña." (Ādi-khaṇḍa, Pauganga-līla, 575)

For a detailed description of the correlation between the saṅkīrtana-yajña and Vedic sacrifices please refer to Caitanya-maṅgala, Madhya-khaṇḍa (*Mahāprabhura vividhāveśe prema-vitarāṇa*), verses 81-90.

Therefore, initiation into chanting of the holy names (*hari-nāma-dīkṣā*) may be likened to the *yajña-dīkṣā* for the Kali-yuga. This is corroborated by the statement of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the nāma-ācārya - "the great teacher of the chanting of the holy names":

*“saṅkhyā-nāma-saṅkīrtana—ei ‘mahā-yajña’ manye  
tāhāte dīkṣita āmi ha-i prati-dine*

"I have been initiated into a vow to perform a great sacrifice by chanting the holy name a certain number of times every day." (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 3.240).

### Śrī Caitanya's dikṣa

In this context it is interesting to note that the author of Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, describes Śrī Caitanya's initiation from Īśvara Purī with a pronounced emphasis on the holy name. There he uses "mantra" and "nāma" interchangeably. According to the early biographies, Śrī Caitanya was initiated with a ten-syllable kṛṣṇa-mantra:

*sa ittham ākarṇya harer vaco'mṛtaṁ*

*mudā dadau mantra-varaṁ mati-jñāḥ  
daśākṣaraṁ prāpya sa gauracandramāṁ  
tuṣṭāva taṁ bhakti-vibhāvitaḥ svayam*<sup>80</sup>

Hearing the nectarean words of Gaura Hari, Īśvara Purī could understand His pure mentality, and gladly he awarded Him a sublime mantra of ten syllables. Experiencing a spontaneous awakening of pure devotion, Śrī Gaura Candra offered some words of praise to His gurudeva. (Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 1.15.18)<sup>81</sup>.

*tabe tāna sthāne śikṣā-guru nārāyaṇa  
karilena daśākṣara-mantrera grahaṇa*

Then the Supreme Lord, who is śikṣā-guru of everyone, accepted the ten syllable mantra from Īśvara Purī. (Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa 17.107).

*tatraiva daiva-vaśataḥ samupeyivāṁsaṁ  
nyāsīndram īśvara-purīm urarī-cakāra  
śikṣā-gurur gurutayā daśa-varṇa-vidyām  
āsādyā mādharma-purīndra-vaśāṁ vaśīśaḥ*<sup>82</sup>

“There He accepted as His guru Īśvara Purī, who by fate had come there. Śrī Caitanya, the master of all self-controlled yogīs, then accepted the ten-syllable mantra from His guru, who had learned it from Mādhavendra Purī.” (Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka of Kavi Karṇapūra, 1.77).<sup>83</sup>

However, in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta Śrī Caitanya and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī use the description of his dīkṣā as an opportunity to connect this very important point in his life (initiation) with the mission of his descent to this world – nama-saṅkīrtana and widespread propagation of the holy names. This mission indeed started immediately after Śrī Caitanya returned to Navadvīpa from Gayā, where he met his guru and received dīkṣā. Since both kṛṣṇa-mantra and kṛṣṇa-nāma are philosophically non-different from Kṛṣṇa himself, there is no fault in describing Śrī Caitanya's dīkṣā by using these both terms interchangeably.

Thus, according to Śrī Caitanya, his guru told him the following<sup>84</sup>:

*mūrkhā tumi, tomāra nāhika vedāntādhikāra  
'kṛṣṇa-mantra' japa sadā,—ei mantra-sāra*

“‘You are a fool,’ he said. ‘You are not qualified to study Vedānta philosophy, and therefore You must always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. This is the essence of all mantras, or Vedic hymns.

*kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana  
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa*

“‘Simply by chanting Kṛṣṇa-mantra one can obtain freedom from material existence. Simply by chanting Kṛṣṇa's names one will be able to see the lotus feet of the Lord.

*nāma vinu kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma  
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma, ei śāstra-marma*

“‘In this Age of Kali there is no religious principle other than the chanting of the holy name, which is the essence of all Vedic hymns. This is the purport of all scriptures.’” (Ādi 7.72-74).

*eta bali' eka śloka śikhāila more  
kaṇṭhe kari' ei śloka kariha vicāre*

“After describing the potency of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, My spiritual master taught Me another verse, advising Me to always keep it within My throat.

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“For spiritual progress in this Age of Kali, there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative to the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.” (Ādi 7.75-76).

We can clearly see how the emphasis in this verses gradually gravitates from a specific dikṣā-mantra (which is known only to the initiated disciple and not to be openly chanted or even disclosed to others) towards kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana (which is open to one and all).

After this Śrī Caitanya is described as only chanting the name and not mantra:

*ei ājñā pāñā nāma la-i anukṣaṇa  
nāma laite laite mora bhrānta haila mana*

“Since I received this order from My spiritual master, I always chant the holy name, but I thought that by chanting and chanting the holy name I had been bewildered. (Ādi 7.77)

*tabe dhairya dhari’ mane kariluṅ vicāra  
kṛṣṇa-nāme jñānācchanna ha-ila āmāra*

“Collecting My patience, therefore, I began to consider that chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa had covered all My spiritual knowledge. (Ādi 7.79).

However, when he asks his guru what had happened to him, he again uses the word "mantra":

*kibā mantra dilā, gosāñi, kibā tāra bala  
japite japite mantra karila pāgala*

“My dear lord, what kind of mantra have you given Me? I have become mad simply by chanting this mahā-mantra! (Ādi 7.81).

Īśvara Purī replies by using the broad term "kṛṣṇa-nāma-mahā-mantra":

*kṛṣṇa-nāma-mahā-mantrera ei ta’ svabhāva  
yei jape, tāra kṛṣṇe upajaye bhāva*

“It is the nature of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra that anyone who chants it immediately develops his loving ecstasy for Kṛṣṇa. (Ādi 7.83).

However, later on he again speaks of the results of chanting of any holy name of the Lord and not just dikṣā-mantra:

*kṛṣṇa-nāmera phala—‘premā’, sarva-śāstre kaya  
bhāgye sei premā tomāya karila udaya*

“The conclusion of all revealed scriptures is that one should awaken his dormant love of Godhead. You are greatly fortunate to have already done so.” (Ādi 7.86).

And finally, he gives Śrī Caitanya the order to chant holy names and instruct others to do so:

*nāca, gāo, bhakta-saṅge kara saṅkīrtana*

“My dear child, continue dancing, chanting and performing saṅkīrtana in association with devotees. Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting kṛṣṇa-nāma, for by this process You will be able to deliver all fallen souls.” (Ādi 7.92).

So, this was the reason behind Śrī Caitanya's constant saṅkīrtana:

*ei tāñra vākye āmi dṛḍha viśvāsa dhari'  
nirantara kṛṣṇa-nāma saṅkīrtana kari*

*sei kṛṣṇa-nāma kabhu gāoyāya, nācāya  
gāhi, nāci nāhi āmi āpana-icchāya*

“I firmly believe in these words of My spiritual master, and therefore I always chant the holy name of the Lord, alone and in the association of devotees. That holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa sometimes causes Me to chant and dance, and therefore I chant and dance. Please do not think that I intentionally do it. I do it automatically. (Ādi 7.95-96).

We can see from this description how mantra and holy name are interconnected and at the same time that the holy name is more important than a secret dikṣā-mantra.

Some say that since Caitanya-caritāmṛta, which is the most authoritative biography of Śrī Caitanya, does not mention Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra explicitly and since it is a mantra, then it should not be chanted loudly but only pronounced very softly or, even better, meditated upon in one's mind, just as any dikṣā-mantra, which should not be disclosed to anyone. Nārada-pañcarātra states:

*sva-mantro nopadeṣṭavyo vaktavyaś ca na saṁsadi*<sup>85</sup>

"A disciple should not instruct others in the mantra he has received from his spiritual master, nor should he chant it loudly in front of others."

However, śāstras do not forbid loud chanting of the hari-nāma-mahā-mantra but instead encourage everyone to chant it loudly. For example, Padma Purāṇa (Svarga-khaṇḍa 50.6, 12, 14-15)<sup>86</sup> states:

*harer nāma mahā-mantrair naśyet pāpa piśācakaṁ*

“The mahā-mantra of the holy names destroys all witches of sin.”

*harer agre svanair uccair nṛtyaṁs tan-nāma-kṛṇ naraḥ  
punāti bhuvanaṁ viprā gaṅgādi-salilaṁ yathā*

O brāhmaṇas! A person who dances in front of Lord Hari and loudly chants his names, purifies the world just as the water of Gaṅgā and other sacred rivers.

*hareḥ pradakṣiṇaṁ kurvann uccais tan-nāma-kṛṇ naraḥ  
karatālādi-sandhānaṁ su-svaraṁ kala-śabditam  
brahma-hatyādikam pāpaṁ tenaiva kara-tālitam*

A person who, while circumambulating Lord Hari, loudly sings his holy names with a melodious voice and claps his hands, is relieved of sins like killing of brāhmaṇa.”

One should refer to Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa, Chapter 16, for a detailed discussion of the benefits of loud chanting of the holy names.

And as we have already seen above, Śrī Caitanya's associates explicitly state that he chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra consisting of sixteen names and thirty-two syllable in a loud voice and in public. Moreover, he engaged others in a loud chanting:

*tataḥ śrī-gaurāṅgaḥ samavadad atīva-pramudito  
hare kṛṣṇety uccair vada muhur iti śrī-maya-tanuḥ  
tato'sau tat procya prativalita-romāñca-lalito  
rudāms tat-tat-karmārabhata bahu-duḥkhair vidalitaḥ*<sup>87</sup>

“In great joy, beautiful Gaurāṅga said, “Chant 'Hare Kṛṣṇa' loudly at all times!” When he said this, the barber, torn apart with sorrow, performed his task while crying, his hairs standing on end.” (Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahā-kavya of Kavi Karṇapūra, 11.54)<sup>88</sup>.

### Explanations of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the first among Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇavas who showed the connection between the eight pairs of names in Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra and Śrī Caitanya's famous Śikṣāṣṭaka ("Instructions in eight verses"), and hence – with the progressive path of bhakti described by Rūpa Gosvāmī in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.15-16). In his Bhajana-rahasya Bhaktivinoda writes:

*hare kṛṣṇa ṣola nāma aṣṭa-yuga haya  
aṣṭa-yuga arthe aṣṭa-śloka prabhu kaya*

*ādi hare-kṛṣṇa arthe avidyā-damana  
śraddhāra sahita kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana*

Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra consists of sixteen names in eight pairs. The Lord composed eight verses that explain these eight pairs of names.

The first pair, “Hare Kṛṣṇa,” means the removal of ignorance and the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names with faith (*śraddhā*).

*āra hare-kṛṣṇa nāma kṛṣṇa sarva-śakti  
sādhu saṅge nāmāśraye bhajanānurakti*

*seita bhajana-krame sarvānārtha-nāśa  
anarthāpagame nāme niṣṭhāra vikāśa*

The second pair, “Hare Kṛṣṇa,” means that the holy name has all Kṛṣṇa’s potencies. They indicate the attachment for *bhajana* by taking shelter of the holy names in the association of saintly persons (*sādhu-saṅga*).

In this gradual process of *bhajana* all the *anarthas* are destroyed and then the firm faith in the holy name appears (*bhajana-kriyā* and *anartha-nivṛtti*).

*ṭṛtīye viśuddha-bhakta caritrera saha  
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa nāme niṣṭhā kare aharaha*

The third pair, “Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa,” means that one chants Kṛṣṇa's names with firm faith day and night in the company of pure devotees (*niṣṭhā*).

*caturthe ahaitukī bhakti uddīpana  
ruci saha hare hare nāma-saṅkīrtana*

The fourth pair, "Hare Hare," means that unmotivated devotion is awakened and one chants the holy



names with a taste (*ruci*).

*pañcamete śuddha dāsya rucira sahita  
hare rāma saṅkīrtana smaraṇa vihita*

The fifth pair, "Hare Rāma," indicates an attitude of pure service and a taste for it. Here one should start the practice of *smaraṇa* (remembrance) (*āsakti*).

*ṣaṣṭhe bhāvāṅkure hare rāmeti kīrtana  
saṁsāre aruci kṛṣṇe ruci samarpaṇa*

The sixth pair, "Hare Rāma", indicates the beginning of *bhāva* (transcendental emotions), which makes one lose all taste for material life and directs one's attachment to Kṛṣṇa (*bhāva*).

*saptame madhurāsakti rādhā-padāśraya  
vipralambhe rāma rāma nāmera udaya*

The seventh pair, "Rāma Rāma," indicates the attachment for the conjugal love and taking shelter of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet. Here one chants the holy name in the mood of separation.

*aṣṭame vrajete aṣṭa-kāla gopī-bhāva  
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-prema-sevā prayojana lābha*

The eighth pair, "Hare Hare," indicates the attainment of the goal of life – loving service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, in the mood of the gopīs, throughout the eight divisions of day and night (*prema*). (*Bhajana-rahasya*, *prathama-yāma-sādhana*).

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (17.129), quoting from *Mantrārṇava*, describes the main components of *mantra-japa*:

*manah-saṁharaṇam śaucaṁ maunaṁ mantrārtha-cintanam  
avyagrataṁ anirvedo japa-sampatti-hetavaḥ*

"Activities such as controlling the mind, striving for purity, observing silence, contemplating the meaning of the mantra, exhibiting peacefulness, and showing eagerness for chanting are the qualities that enable one to attain the maximum benefit of *japa*."

Since *mantrārtha-cintanam* (contemplating the meaning of the mantra) is necessary for a successful chanting, many Gauḍīya-ācāryas have written explanation of Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī (Kusumasarovara-vale) has collected and published eight different explanations of the Hare Kṛṣṇa-mahā-mantra in 1954<sup>89</sup>. All of them explain each of the sixteen names in the mantra. Among them Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī's Hari-nāma-mahā-mantra-vyākhyā is fairly well-known. Others, like explanations attributed to Jīva Gosvāmī or Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, are not well-known and some are not mentioned anywhere in the works of Gauḍīya writers. Rājendralāla Mitra records a notice of a manuscript of Hare-kṛṣṇa-mahā-mantrārtha-nirūpaṇam in 25 verses ascribed to Rūpa Gosvāmī<sup>90</sup>.

These commentaries explain the words of the mantra in the mood of *mādhurya*, very sweet and close relationship with the Lord, which is the highest mood of worship for the followers of Śrī Caitanya. For example, one of the standard and often quoted explanations is the one given by Śrī Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī (early 17<sup>th</sup> century), where he explains the meaning of the three names as follows:

*vijñāpya bhagavat-tattvaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ  
haraty avidyāṁ tat kāryam ato harir iti smṛtaḥ*

The truth regarding Bhagavān should be known. He has a form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. Because he takes away (*harati*) the ignorance and its work (material existence), he is known as Hari.

*harati śrī-kṛṣṇa-manaḥ kṛṣṇāhlāda-svarūpiṇī  
ato harety anenaiva śrī-rādhā parikīrtitā*

Śrī Rādhā, who is Lord Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency, steals his mind. Therefore she is glorified as Harā.

*ānandaika-sukha-svāmī śyāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ  
gokulānandano nanda-nandanaḥ kṛṣṇa īryate*

The lotus-eyed Śyāma is the only happiness and master of Rādhā, the personification of his pleasure potency. Thus the beloved son of Nanda, who gives bliss to the inhabitants of Gokula, is known as Kṛṣṇa.

*vaidagdhī sāra-sarvasvaṁ mūrti-līlādhidaivatam  
rādhikāṁ ramya-nityaṁ rāma ity abhidhīyate*

He is unexcelled in his cleverness and is the presiding deity of amorous pastimes. Because he always brings pleasure to Rādhikā, he is known as Rāma<sup>91</sup>.

However, before one takes to such intimate worship, especially in the modern age, one is advised to begin with understanding the greatness of the Lord and his opulences (*aiśvarya*). On this stage of philosophical approach to the God realization the three names may have other meanings and the subtle differences between the different forms of the Lord are not necessarily crucial. Explaining this, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī writes:

“In the inclination for service from the point of view of *aiśvarya* (opulence), 'Hare Rāma' refers to Lord Rāma, the son of Daśaratha. But the devotees who worship the Lord on the path of *mādhurya* (sweetness) know 'Rāma' to be 'Gopī-Rāmana', or the enjoyer of the gopis. He is the son of Nanda (Kṛṣṇa). Whenever the name 'Rāma' indicates service to Rādhā-Rāmaṇa (Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys and gives enjoyment to Rādhā), then the name 'Hare' refers to the original form of the spiritual energy, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the daughter of king Vrsabhānu.”<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, due to the rules of Sanskrit grammar and the mood of the chanter there may be certain ambiguity regarding the name “Hare,” which grammatically is the vocative case of both “Hari” (Kṛṣṇa) and “Harā” (Rādhā).

Although both meaning are possible and accepted, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas usually stress the latter meaning – “Hare” being the vocative of Harā (Rādhā), who is the personification of the pleasure potency of the Lord and the dearest devotee of Kṛṣṇa. This was the meaning given to the people of the western world by A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda along with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra which he brought from India in 1965:

“The word Harā is the form of addressing the energy of the Lord, and the words Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are forms of addressing the Lord Himself. Both Kṛṣṇa and Rāma mean the supreme pleasure, and Harā is the supreme pleasure energy of the Lord, changed to Hare in the vocative. The supreme pleasure energy of the Lord helps us to reach the Lord.”<sup>93</sup>

The prayerful mood in which one should chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is explained by Bhaktivedānta Swami as follows:

“This Hare Krishna Mantra is addressed to the energy of the Lord and the Lord Himself to keep the chanter in his eternal position of being enjoyed. The prayer is "My Lord, Oh the Spiritual Energy of the Lord, kindly keep me engaged in Your service.”<sup>94</sup>

Thus, according to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is an easy

and sublime spiritual practice (*sādhana*), which is deeply rooted both in scriptures and in a centuries-long tradition. It is available to everyone and the result of it is awakening of one's dormant love of God. The closer one comes to this goal, the more one experiences how the transcendental reality unfolds within these holy names.

- There are similar statements in many other Purāṇas but it would not be feasible to reproduce all or even many of them here. Cf. Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.2.17), Padma Purāṇa (Uttara-khaṇḍa 72.25) and the Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa (38.97) etc.
- This verse is quoted three times in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 7.76, Ādi 17.21, Madhya 6.242). Current editions of both Nārada-purāṇa and Bṛhan-nāradya-purāṇa have a slightly different reading: *harer nāmaiva nāmaiva nāmaiva mama jīvanam / kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā* ||
- Raja Radha Kanta Deva (comp.), *Śabda-kalpa-drumah* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1967, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition), p. 613.
- This definition is also expressed in the following way: “mantāraṁ trāyate iti mantraś cāpy abhidīyate.” It is quoted by Parāśara Bhaṭṭar in his commentary on Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma (verse 30, name #281 “mantra”) in *Śrī Viṣṇor nāmasahasram* with three commentaries (Mumbai: Lakṣmīveṅkaṭeśvara Press, 1815 Śaka [A.D. 1893]), p. 294.
- Medinikośaḥ* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1968), p. 128.
- Brahmapurāṇam*, Sanskrit text with Bengali translation by Tarkānana Pañcaratna (Kolkata: Baṅgavāsī Press, n.d.), p. 291.
- “śrī gaurasundara jagatke ye śikṣā diyechen, sei śikṣā āmarā guru-pāda-padma ha'te mantra-rūpe lābha karechi. śrī guru-pāda-padma āmādigake ye-jiniṣa diyechen, tā' sādharmaṇa mantra nahe – mahā-mantra. manana-dharma ha'te trāṇa kare ye-jiniṣa, sei-jiniṣera nāma – mantra. sādharmaṇa mantra caturthy-anta pada o 'namaḥ', 'svāhā', 'svadhā' prabhṛti śabda-prayukta, āra mahā-mantra – sambodhanātmaka pada. śrī bhagavānera nāma-i – mahā-mantra. sei śrī-nāma eta śakti dhāraṇa kare, ye-śakti āra kona vastute pāyā yāya nā”. “Gauḍīya” magazine, Vol.9, issue #11, October 25, 1930, p. 203.
- Śrīmat Puridāsa Mahāśaya (ed.), *Śrī Śrī Krāma-sandarbha*, (Vṛndāvan: Śrī Haridāsa Śarma, 1952), p. 208.
- As decribed in Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi 14.145-146 and Madhya 23.76-77.
- Śrī Caitanya-śatakam 64.
- Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī, *Śrī Gaura-Govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati*, 2.2-3.
- Padma Purāṇa and Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa of Skanda Purāṇa as quoted by many Gauḍīya authors, including Sanātana Goswami (Hari-bhakti-vilasa 11.498), Jīva Goswami (Kṛṣṇ-sandarbha 82 and the commentary to Brahma-samhita 5.1) and Baladeva Vidyābhusana (Commentary to Viṣṇu-sahasra-nama, 20).
- Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (Bombay: Venkaṭeśvara Steam Press, 1912), p. 131.
- This verse is quoted by Rūpa Goswami in his “Mathura-mahatmya” (111) and by Jīva Goswami in his “Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha” (82). It is not found in the current editions of Padma-Purāṇa.
- Translation is taken from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1984 edition.
- “golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana.” See Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's *Prārthanā*.
- Translation is taken from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1982 edition.
- V.L. Panashikar (ed.), *Īśādy-aṣṭottara-śatopaniṣadaḥ* (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1913), pp. 1111-1112.
- Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa (Kusuma-sarovara-vale) (ed.), *Śrī Mahā-mantra-vyākhyāṣṭakam* (Vrindavan, 1954), pp. 1-3.
- From a conversation with a visitor, September 4, 1932. Printed in the “Gauḍīya” magazine, Vol.11, issue #7, October 22, 1932, p. 101.
- Quoted in Śrī Atindriya dāsādhikāri (compl.), *Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra* (Kolkata: Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 440 Gaurābda [1926]), p. 312-313 (17.31-32, 34-35).
- Śrī Dhyānacandrapaddhatiḥ (Navadvīpa: Śrī Gopīnāth Gauḍīya Maṭh, n.d.), p. 35.
- Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.44, Bombay, December 12, 1974.
- It is noteworthy that Odisha is one of the places with many followers of Pippalāda-śakha of the Atharva-veda. It is there that hitherto unknown texts of this branch were discovered by Durgamohan Bhattacharya in 1957. These newly discovered Odishan manuscripts have about 8000 mantras, while the single surviving Kashmirian manuscript of Pippalada recension has only 6500. See Jan Gonda, *A History of Indian Literature: Vedic Literature (Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas)*, Vol. 1, Fasc. 1, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1975, p. 272 and 276. The *Caraṇavyūha* of Śaunaka (chapter 4) says that there are 9 recensions of the Atharva-veda. Only two are extant.
- Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda (ed.), *Śrī Caitanyopaniṣat*, with *Śrī Caitanya-caraṇāmṛta* Sanskrit commentary and *Amṛta-bindu* Bengali translation (Dhaka: Śrī Madhva-Gauḍīya Maṭha, 448 Gaurābda [A.D. 1934]), p. 6.
- ibid, p. 8.
- Śrī Dhyānacandrapaddhatiḥ (Navadvīpa: Śrī Gopīnāth Gauḍīya Maṭh, n.d.), p. 101.
- Śrī Haridāsa Dāsa (ed.), *Śrī Preya-bhakti-rasārṇava*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-kadamba*, *Śrī Śyāmacandrodaya* (Navadvīpa: Haribol Kutir, 463 Gaurābda [1949]), p. 187.
- Quoted in Śrī Atindriya dāsādhikāri (compl.), *Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra* (Kolkata: Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 440 Gaurābda [1926]), p. 314 (17.40).
- Nandakumar Kaviratna Bhattacharya (trans.), *Rādhā-hṛdaya (Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa Uttara-khaṇḍa)* (Kolkata: Tara Library, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1915), pp. 81-82.
- Quoted in Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa (Kusuma-sarovara-vale) (ed.), *Śrī Mahā-mantra-vyākhyāṣṭakam* (Vrindavan, 1954), p. 4.
- Surendramohana Bhaṭṭācārya (ed.), *Rādhā-tantram* (Kolkata: Sārasvata Library, Bengali year 1324 [1917]), pp. 10-11

- 33 M.C. Apte (ed.), *Padma Purāṇa* (Puna: AnandasRāma Sanskrit Series, 1894), Vol. 2 (Brahma and Patala khandas), p.616.
- 34 *ibid*, p. 464.
- 35 M.C. Apte (ed.), *Padma Purāṇa* (Puna: Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, 1894), Vol. 4 (Uttara-khanda), p. 1636.
- 36 Murāri Gupta, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛtam* (Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 2009), edited and translated into Bengali by Haridas Das, p. 76.
- 37 Translation by Kuśakratha dāsa.
- 38 Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* (Kolkata: Gauḍīya Mission, 1991), p. 165.
- 39 Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (Murshidabad: Rama Narayana Vidyaratna, 1884), pp. 21-22.
- 40 Translation by Kuśakratha dāsa.
- 41 Balāicand Goswami and Atulakṛṣṇa Goswami (ed.), *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Kolkata: Śrī Mahāprabhu Mandir, 1897), p. 3.
- 42 *ibid*.
- 43 Śrī Nityasvarūpa brahmacārī (ed.), *Śrī Stava-puṣpāñjaliḥ* (Stavamālā and Stavāvalī) with commentary and Bengali translation (Vṛndāvana: Śrī Devakīnandana Press, 1903), p. 8.
- 44 *ibid*.
- 45 Śrīmat Purīdāsa Mahāśaya (ed.), *Śrī Śrī Stavāvalī* (Mymensingh: Śrī Śacīnātha Rāya Caturdhurī, 1947), p. 2.
- 46 Translation by Kuśakratha dāsa.
- 47 See, *Śrī Bhakti-candrikā* (Śrīkhaṇḍa: Kīśorānanda Ṭhākura, 2012), pp. 198-243.
- 48 Śrī Govindadeva Kavi, *Śrī Śrī Gaura-kṛṣṇodayaḥ* (Māyāpura: Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, 2002, 4<sup>th</sup> edition), edited by Śrī Bimalā-prasāda Siddhānta Sarasvatī, p. 82.
- 49 Śrī Haridāsa Dāsa (ed.), *Śrī Preya-bhakti-rasārṇava*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-kadamba*, *Śrī Śyāmacandrodaya* (Navadvīpa: Haribol Kutir, 463 Gaurābda [1949]), pp. 187, 190.
- 50 Nityānanda Dāsa, *Prema-vilāsa* (Kolkata: Maheśa Library, 1999), edited by Bijana Goswami, p. 48.
- 51 *ibid*, p. 123.
- 52 Yadunandana dāsa, *Karṇānanda*, in Kīśori Dāsa Bābajī ed. *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Ācārya viṣayaka racanāvalī* (Vaiṣṇava Research Institute, Halisahar, W.B., 1417 Bengali year [1410 A.D.]), p. 161.
- 53 Gopījanavallabha Dāsa, *Rasika Maṅgala* (Halisahar: Vaisnava Research Institute, 1997), edited by Kīśorī dāsa Bābajī, Vol.1, p.12.
- 54 *ibid*, p.30.
- 55 *ibid*, p.31.
- 56 *ibid*, p.63.
- 57 Gopījanavallabha Dāsa, *Rasika Maṅgala* (Halisahar: Vaisnava Research Institute, 2000), edited by Kīśorī dāsa Bābajī, Vol.2, p.26.
- 58 Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura, *Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara* (Kolkata: Gauḍīya Mission, 2004), p. 210.
- 59 Sanātana Gosvāmī, *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (Mayapur: Sri Caitanya Gaudiya Math, 2000), Vol.2, p.444.
- 60 *ibid*, p.443
- 61 This translation is taken from the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 15.108) Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1974 edition.
- 62 Śrīmat Purīdāsa Mahāśaya (ed.), *Śrī Śrī Padyāvalī* (Mymensingh: Śrī Śacīnātha Rāya Caturdhurī, 1946), p. 4.
- 63 This translation is taken from the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 15.110) Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1974 edition.
- 64 Quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (2.9) and Bhakti-sandarbhā (283). A similar definition is given in the Gautamīya-tantra (7.2): *dadāti bhāvaṁ cet kṣiṇuyāt pāpa-santatiḥ | tena dīkṣeti vikhyātā munibhis tantra-pāragaiḥ*.
- 65 Translation by Śrī Gopīparādhana Dāsa. Unpublished manuscript.
- 66 *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* commentary on Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya 1.407.
- 67 Nandakumar Kaviratna Bhattacharya (trans.), *Rādhā-hṛdaya* (*Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa Uttara-khaṇḍa*) (Kolkata: Tara Library, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1915), pp. 80-83.
- 68 Quoted in Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa (Kusuma-sarovara-vale) (ed.), *Śrī Mahā-mantra-vyākhyāṣṭakam* (Vrindavan, 1954), p. 3.
- 69 Nityānanda Dāsa, *Prema-vilāsa* (Kolkata: Maheśa Library, 1999), edited by Bijana Goswami, p. 115.
- 70 Yadunandana dāsa, *Karṇānanda*, in Kīśori Dāsa Bābajī ed. *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Ācārya viṣayaka racanāvalī* (Vaiṣṇava Research Institute, Halisahar, W.B., 1417 Bengali year [1410 A.D.]), p. 111.
- 71 See for instance Bhakti-sandarbhā (202): *śrī-mantra-gurus tv eka eva niṣṭesya mānatvād bahūnām*.
- 72 Kanakalal Sarma (ed.), *Śrīmat Pāṇini-muni-praṇītaḥ Dhātu-pāṭhaḥ* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1969), p. 16.
- 73 See, for instance, *Apastamba-śrauta-sūtra* (chapters 10-12) for the detailed description of the yajña-dīkṣa procedures.
- 74 Translation is taken from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1982 edition.
- 75 Murāri Gupta, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛtam* (Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 2009), edited and translated into Bengali by Haridas Das, p. 22.
- 76 *ibid*, p. 85.
- 77 *ibid*, p.144.

- 78 Translation is taken from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1974 edition. See also Ādi 11.99 and Antya 20.9.
- 79 Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* (Kolkata: Gauḍīya Mission, 1991), p.59. See also Madhya-khaṇḍa, Mahāprabhura vividhāveśe prema-vitarāṇa, verse 73.
- 80 Murāri Gupta, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛtam* (Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 2009), edited and translated into Bengali by Haridas Das, p. 74.
- 81 Translation by Kuśakratha dāsa.
- 82 Kavi Karṇapūra, *Śrī Caitanyacandrodayam*, edited by Śrīmat Purīdāsa Mahāśaya, (Vṛndāvan: Śrī Haridāsa Śarma, 1954), p. 7.
- 83 Translation by Kuśakratha dāsa.
- 84 Most of translations in this section are taken the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1974 edition of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.
- 85 Quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.136.
- 86 M.C. Apte (ed.), *Padma Purāṇa* (Puna: Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, 1893), Vol. 1 (Ādi [Svarga] and Bhūmi-khaṇḍas), p.87.
- 87 Kavi Karṇapūra, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahā-kavya* (Kolkata: Prāṇa Kiśora Gosvāmī, 1958), p.314.
- 88 Translation by Bhānu Svāmī.
- 89 Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa (Kusuma-sarovara-vale) (ed.), *Śrī Mahā-mantra-vyākhyāṣṭakam* (Vrindavan, 1954).
- 90 *Notices of Sanskrit MSS* (Calcutta: 1887), Vol.9, part 1, p.77 (#2966).
- 91 Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa (Kusuma-sarovara-vale) (ed.), *Śrī Mahā-mantra-vyākhyāṣṭakam* (Vrindavan, 1954), p. 9.
- 92 From a letter dated October 20, 1928 (*Prabhupādera Patrāvalī* (Kolkata: Gauḍīya Mission, 1999), p.51), also included in *Śrī Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta* (Baipur: Śrī Gaurāṅga Maṭha, 2010), p. 309.
- 93 From the audio recorded explanation of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Transcribed text is included in *Kṛṣṇa consciousness: The Topmost Yoga System*, (Boston: ISKCON Press, 1970), p. 34.
- 94 Letter Arundhati, Hamburg, 9 September, 1969.